



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

## Mailroom named for man who served Soldiers

By Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Troth

During an Aug. 5 ceremony, the Fort Carson Medical Department Activity mailroom was named in honor of a former mail clerk who died last year.

The dedication ceremony for the Douglas A. McCleary Mail and Distribution Center was attended by family and friends of the man who sorted and delivered mail at Evans Army Community Hospital for 18 years.

"He didn't just do it as a job," said Joel Sundquist, McCleary's former supervisor. "He loved doing his job because he loved the Soldiers and the family members and everyone that worked here."

At the ceremony, MEDDAC Commander Col. John McGrath referenced David Brin's book "The Postman," which was turned into the 1997 movie of the same name. The story follows a wandering minstrel (Kevin Costner) in a post-apocalyptic America, who finds an old postal truck, which contains the remains of a dead postman and his charge of letters. Costner's character dons the dead man's clothes and begins delivering the mail.

"He becomes a postman and his efforts start to bind this country back together," McGrath said. "What Doug did, in his role as postman for our hospital, was bind people together."

Sundquist said that McCleary set a standard in the mailroom that is still followed today.

"He wouldn't let the clinics pick up the mail for patients," he said. "Doug would hand deliver their mail bedside. He said he did it because 'it is all about the Soldier'."

Prior to working at EACH, McCleary himself served for almost 18 years in the Army, as an active duty Soldier, a reservist and a National Guardsman. His son Nicholas remembers being a child and watching his dad get ready for weekend drills.

"I would see him polish his boots, iron his uniforms," the younger McCleary said. "He was so excited to do it and had so much pride in his uniform and getting it ready. He took pride in his work no matter what it was."



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Nicholas remembers seeing this pride again when he was a teenager. His dad was laid off from a federal job and had to get a job as a trash man to provide for his family.

“I thought it must be kind of humiliating to pick up other people’s trash, but he never showed it,” Nicholas said. “He went about it with such pride.

“And I really see that is what he did at this hospital. He did his work and he was proud to do it.”

Upon McCleary’s death last November, his dedication to the mailroom, the hospital staff and its patients inspired fellow hospital employee Merrell Sellers to create a sign for the mailroom. The wooden sign had McCleary’s image burned into it and proclaimed the room as the Douglas A. McCleary Mailroom.

When McGrath found out about the sign he said “That’s a great idea, but let’s make this official.”

“I said just give me a direction and I’ll start running, and here we are today honoring a man who loved Soldiers so much that he went out of his way more times than I can count to make sure they got their mail,” Sundquist said.

During the ceremony Sundquist and Sellers presented McCleary’s widow, Mimi, with a copy of the original “unofficial” mailroom sign. The back of her sign was filled with the signatures of her husband’s former co-workers.

“It is so beautiful, it looks just like him,” said Mimi. “I’ll cherish this forever.”

“These ceremonies are usually for high ranking officers, decorated war veterans or people who have made a breakthrough in medicine,” said Nicholas. “But that doesn’t apply to my dad. He was just my dad. But sometimes common men do great things.”



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Mimi McCleary is caught off guard as she and her children unveil the plaque that designates Evans Army Community Hospital mailroom the Douglas A. McCleary Mail and Distribution Center in honor of her deceased husband. The center was named in honor of Douglas McCleary who had worked as an EACH mail clerk for 18 years before he died in 2012. (Photo by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jeff Troth)